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NEWS RELEASE

2005 DAKOTA COUNTY JUVENILE PROSECUTION STATISTICS RELEASED

OVERVIEW

Dakota County Attorney James Backstrom has released statistics for 2005 involving **juvenile prosecutions** handled by his Office. In Minnesota, County Attorneys prosecute all crimes committed by juveniles (youth 10-17 years old) that occur in the county including felonies, gross misdemeanors, misdemeanors and some petty misdemeanors. Backstrom pointed out the following highlights:

- The total number of **juveniles charged**¹ with criminal offenses by his office decreased from 1,968 in 2004 to **1,924**² in 2005.
- The number of **felony level juvenile offenders** charged remained virtually unchanged (359 in 2004 to **362** in 2005).

2005 INCREASE/DECREASE IN JUVENILES CHARGED (BY CITY)

Cities showing an **increase** in the number of juvenile offenders charged included:

- ↑ Apple Valley (349 to 386)
- ↑ Hastings (133 to 143)
- ↑ Inver Grove Heights (122 to 129)
- ↑ South St. Paul (162 to 192)

Cities showing a **decrease** in the number of juvenile offenders charged included:

- ↓ Burnsville (292 to 276)
- ↓ Eagan (297 to 253)
- ↓ Farmington (70 to 59)
- ↓ Lakeville (191 to 178)
- ↓ Rosemount (140 to 121)
- ↓ West St. Paul (86 to 78)

Jurisdictions which **remained** virtually the same in the number of juvenile offenders charged were:

Dakota County Sheriff (46 to 47)
Mendota Heights (55 to 52)

Criminal Division
Scott A. Hersey, Head

Victim/Witness Coordinator
Patricia Ronken

Juvenile and Protective Services Division
Donald E. Bruce, Head

Office Manager
Norma J. Zabel

Civil Division
Jay R. Stassen, Head

Child Support Enforcement Division
Sandra M. Torgerson, Head

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OVERALL DECREASE IN JUVENILES PROSECUTED

Backstrom said this is the third year in a row that Dakota County has experienced a decrease in the overall number of juveniles prosecuted for criminal acts after four years of increases. *Backstrom commented: "After almost tripling in the first six years of the 1990's, the overall number of juveniles prosecuted for criminal acts in Dakota County has leveled off considerably in the last ten years (see attached chart). The 2005 total (i.e. 1,924) is only about 5% more than it was ten years ago in 1996 (i.e. 1,829), which is substantially less than the County's population growth during this same time (i.e. 17%). This is obviously a good sign."*

JUVENILE CRIMES OF VIOLENCE

While the number of charges for **violent juvenile offenses**³ increased from 380 in 2004 to **427** in 2005, (an increase of 12%), this follows a significant decrease of 21% the year before (see attached chart of juvenile violent crime charges in Dakota County over the last decade). The main violent crime committed by juveniles was misdemeanor assault which increased from 223 offenses charged in 2004 to **245** in 2005. *Backstrom commented: "The number of violent juvenile offenses charged in Dakota County in 2005 (i.e. 427) is actually less today than it was ten years ago (i.e. 509 in 1996) and just slightly higher than the ten-year average (i.e. 442)."*

JUVENILES CHARGED WITH FELONY OFFENSES

While the number of juvenile felony offenders charged in 2005 remained steady at **362** (compared to 359 in 2004), it is actually less than the average over the past ten years (i.e. 394) (see attached chart). *Backstrom commented: "The fact that the number of felony offenses committed by juveniles in Dakota County is less today than it was ten years ago is remarkable in a county of our size and growth."* Dakota County currently has approximately 385,000 citizens and has grown on average about 3% per year over the last decade. *Backstrom added: "I believe the low number of serious crimes involving juveniles in Dakota County is a reflection of the close working relationships police departments have developed with schools through school resource officers and the active prevention and early intervention efforts focused on youth put forth by police, the Dakota County Attorney's Office and the Dakota County Public Health Department."*

PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAMS FOR JUVENILES

Prevention of juvenile crime has long been a priority for County Attorney Backstrom, who has long served as a co-chair of the Juvenile Justice Committees for both the Minnesota County Attorney's Association and the National District Attorney's Association for many years. *"I am a strong believer in prevention, early intervention, and education efforts to reduce juvenile crime," Backstrom stated. "I believe the single most effective thing we can do to reduce crime in our nation is to invest time, resources and energy in our nation's children," he added.*

Early Intervention Programs. Backstrom indicated that the Dakota County Attorney's Office coordinates a number of **youth accountability programs for first time offenders** involved in the illegal use of alcohol, small amounts of marijuana, and tobacco, as well as lower level property crimes. A more intensive program for second time users of alcohol or small amounts of marijuana is also available. Youth accountability programs are designed to insure that youth committing certain first or second time non-violent offenses are held responsible for their criminal behavior quickly outside of the courtroom. *Backstrom commented: "While these programs divert youthful offenders outside of the court process, they are designed to insure appropriate accountability with an education and prevention focus. Youth pay for the cost of attending these alternatives to court, which is equivalent to the fine they would receive from a judge for these offenses and, where appropriate, pay restitution to the victim and complete some community work service. A parent or guardian is also required to attend all youth accountability programs with their child, which we believe is important and necessary."* In total, **1,584 juvenile offenders were referred to various accountability programs** as an alternative to juvenile court in 2005. Juveniles successfully completing these programs are not prosecuted in juvenile court for these offenses.

The **Peer Court program**, which is a joint project of the District Court, Community Corrections and the County Attorney, has been in existence since 2000 and takes place in six area high schools (Apple Valley, Burnsville, Hastings, Inver Grove Heights, Lakeville, and South St. Paul). Peer Court allows teens to serve as jurors and personally become involved in resolving the problem of juvenile crime in their community. *"Peer Court not only is a unique way of holding juvenile offenders accountable for their actions, it is a great learning experience for members of the peer jury," Backstrom noted.* In 2005, **50** juveniles were referred to Peer Court. District Court Judge Tom Poch was instrumental in establishing this program and remains active in its implementation in Dakota County.

The **Juvenile Firesetter Education and Intervention program** for youth ages 6-17 who are curious about or caught lighting a fire had **34** youth referred Dakota County juveniles and their parents in 2005. This quarterly educational class, which is coordinated by the Dakota County Attorney's Office, has been well received and is a joint project with the State Fire Marshall's Office and local fire departments in our community.

The County Attorney's Office continued to **Prioritize Prosecutions in Schools (PPS)** in 2005 by prioritizing and quickly prosecuting crimes that occur in school or are related to school activities. This PPS initiative which was put in place in 2003 involves closer contact between the County Attorney's Office and schools involving trainings for students and staff, community forums, prevention programming and sharing information, in addition to fast tracking on crimes associated with school activities. Backstrom noted: *"By working together with Dakota County school districts and police departments, we insure a healthier and safer learning environment for children. Quicker prosecution of crimes occurring in schools or on school property also serves as a deterrent to juvenile criminal activity."*

EXPANDED JUVENILE CRIME PREVENTION INITIATIVES

Backstrom indicated that his office was involved in numerous crime prevention efforts in 2005. The **Accelerated Court Truancy Program (ACT)** has been expanded during the 2004-2005 school year to include Independent School District 200 (Hastings) in addition to Independent School District 197 (West St. Paul, Mendota Heights and part of Eagan) District 199 (Inver Grove Heights). Judge Leslie Metzen played a critical role in getting the ACT pilot program initiated and Judge Ed Lynch, Judge Richard Spicer, and Judge Michael Mayer are active in the program. The program requires all truants and a parent or guardian to attend an accelerated truancy diversion meeting, including a judge, prosecutor and school administrative personnel after a youth's third unexcused absence from school. A seventh unexcused absence results in immediate court intervention. Traditional truancy efforts do not result in intervention until after a seventh unexcused absence and court action does not usually occur until after 10-11 unexcused absences. The accelerated program is designed to address these unexcused absences more quickly in hopes of getting these children back into school and off the streets. Backstrom said that studies have shown that children who are truant from school are more likely to engage in criminal behavior and abuse alcohol and other drugs. *"Keeping kids in school not only helps them get the education they need to become successful and productive adults, it reduces crime in our community," Backstrom noted.*

An **anti-bullying initiative**, launched by the County Attorney as part of the PPS program during the 2002-03 school year, continues to be a successful program of educating students on the dangers of bullying and harassing behaviors. Presentations on this topic are also made to teachers and community members. Backstrom indicated that although bullying is often dismissed as part of growing up, it's actually an early form of aggressive and violent behavior. *"Bullying adversely impacts a lot of children. Bullying peaks in middle school and can become even more dangerous if it continues into high school," Backstrom stated.* It has been reported that 160,000 children skip school every day in America because they fear being attacked or intimidated by another student. Up to 60% of children who bully will have a criminal record before the age of 24. Backstrom has developed two 45-minute presentations (one for grade 4th-8th students and one for teachers or parents) which cover: the types of bullying and harassing behavior, statistics associated with it, and provides valuable information for bullies, victims, bystanders, staff and parents. During the last two school years, over 6,000 students, teachers and parents heard Backstrom's anti-bullying message.

Details of the juvenile cases charged by the Dakota County Attorney's Office in 2005 are broken down by type of crime and jurisdiction on the attached charts. In addition to the three statistical charts, attached are three separate charts that cover trends in overall juvenile delinquency prosecutions, juvenile violent crime charges and juvenile dangerous weapons charges. This information is also available on the Dakota County Attorney website at www.co.dakota.mn.us/attorney.

If you have any questions, contact James Backstrom at 651-438-4440.

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¹ Criminal charges are not evidence of guilt. A defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

² An individual may be charged with more than one felony offense in one behavioral incident.

³ Violent juvenile offenses include all levels of homicide, attempted homicide, assault, offenses involving dangerous weapons, kidnapping, robbery, sex offenses and terroristic threats. The statistics in this section reflect the number of charges and not juvenile offenders. A juvenile offender may be charged with more than one offense in a single behavioral incident.

2005 JUVENILE FELONY OFFENSES

OFFICE OF DAKOTA COUNTY ATTORNEY JAMES C. BACKSTROM COUNTY ATTORNEY 1560 HIGHWAY 55 HASTINGS, MN 55033-2392 651-438-4438	Burglary	Theft Related	Drug Related	Dangerous Weapons	Assault Related	Criminal Damage to Property	Sex Related	Terroristic Threats	Forgery Related	Unauthorized Use Motor Vehicle	Receiving Stolen Property	Arson	Fleeing In A Motor Vehicle	Robbery	Criminal Vehicle Injury	Homicide (Including Attempts)	Kidnapping	Obstructing Justice	Physical Abuse of Minor	Traffic Related	TOTAL CHARGES	TOTAL OFFENDERS
Apple Valley	17	4	6	4	14	15	2	14	3	6	7	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	95	67
Burnsville	16	12	2	6	3	2	2	2	4	2	4	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	58	48
Dakota County Sheriff *	0	1	3	2	0	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	10
Eagan	16	3	5	7	4	6	5	3	4	3	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	62	48
Farmington	0	0	2	3	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	8
Hastings	8	5	5	1	4	0	4	1	4	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	36	33
Inver Grove Heights	7	6	1	0	0	0	0	0	4	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	22	18
Lakeville	12	4	9	4	1	0	2	5	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	42	40
Mendota Heights	3	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	6
Other Law Enforcement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rosemount	5	2	8	1	0	2	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	21	17
South St. Paul	5	11	2	9	6	4	6	3	2	2	0	5	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	57	51
West St. Paul	0	5	6	0	0	0	3	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16	16
TOTAL	89	53	49	38	32	31	31	28	26	20	15	14	7	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	436	362

* Drug-related are reported under the city in which the offense occurred. The Drug Task Force includes representatives from the Apple Valley, Burnsville, Eagan, Farmington, Hastings, Inver Grove Heights, Lakeville, Mendota Heights, Rosemount, Savage, South St. Paul and West St. Paul Police Departments and the Dakota County Sheriff's Office.

** Numbers in all categories include charges of attempts to commit the crime.

2005 JUVENILE GROSS MISDEMEANOR OFFENSES

OFFICE OF DAKOTA COUNTY ATTORNEY JAMES C. BACKSTROM COUNTY ATTORNEY 1560 HIGHWAY 55 HASTINGS, MN 55033-2392 651-438-4438	Obstructing Justice	Theft	Criminal Damage to Property	Assault Related	Traffic Related	Dangerous Weapons	Forgery Related	Sex-Related	Stolen Property	Arson	Disorderly Conduct	Burglary	Contribute Delinquency of a Min	Furnishing Alcohol to Minor	Intent to Escape Tax on MV	TOTAL CHARGES	TOTAL OFFENDERS
Apple Valley	3	5	3	2	5	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	23	20
Burnsville	6	5	0	2	2	3	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	22	19
Dakota County Sheriff *	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3
Eagan	2	2	6	2	0	2	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	17	16
Farmington	2	3	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	6
Hastings	0	2	7	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15	12
Inver Grove Heights	3	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	6
Lakeville	4	2	2	1	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	12
Mendota Heights	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Law Enforcement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rosemount	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1
South St. Paul	3	3	5	2	0	0	0	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	18	17
West St. Paul	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	4
TOTAL	26	25	23	16	13	7	7	6	4	3	1	0	0	0	0	131	116

* Drug-related are reported under the city in which the offense occurred. The Drug Task Force includes representatives from the Apple Valley, Burnsville, Eagan, Farmington, Hastings, Inver Grove Heights, Lakeville, Mendota Heights, Rosemount, Savage, South St. Paul and West St. Paul Police Departments and the Dakota County Sheriff's Office.

** Numbers in all categories include charges of attempts to commit the crime.

2005 JUVENILE MISDEMEANOR & PETTY MISDEMEANOR OFFENSES

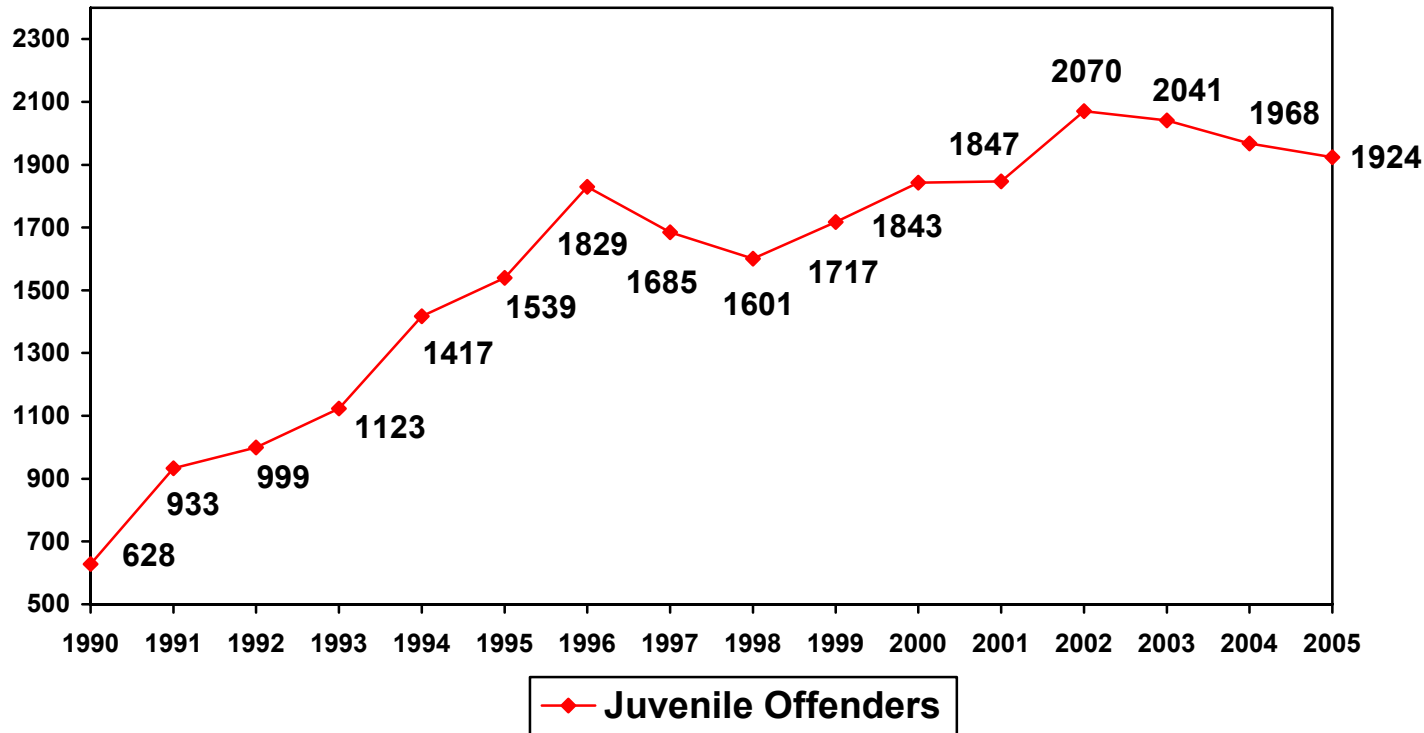
<div style="text-align: center;"> OFFICE OF DAKOTA COUNTY ATTORNEY JAMES C. BACKSTROM COUNTY ATTORNEY 1560 HIGHWAY 55 HASTINGS, MN 55033-2392 651-438-4438 </div>	Disorderly Conduct Related	Theft	Assault Related	Traffic Misdemeanors	Petty Offenses	Criminal Damage to Property	Consumption/Possession of Alcohol	Burglary; Trespassing	Obstructing Justice (Non-Traffic)	Ordinance Violation/Non-weapon	Tampering with a Motor Vehicle	Stolen Property	Public Nuisance	Ordinance Violation/Weapon Related	Possess Small Amount Marijuana-Petty	Legend Drugs & Equipment	Arson	Violation of an OFP or Harassment Order	DUI	Dangerous Weapons	Sex-Related	Game and Fish Violation	TOTAL CHARGES	TOTAL OFFENDERS
Apple Valley	130	56	53	18	22	18	11	16	5	5	1	7	5	10	2	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	362	299
Burnsville	92	67	27	18	14	5	10	3	9	3	6	3	1	0	2	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	263	209
Dakota County Sheriff	7	6	10	12	4	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	44	34
Eagan	68	21	36	25	28	18	20	11	7	4	7	5	4	2	4	2	2	1	2	0	0	0	267	189
Farmington	15	7	9	4	4	2	0	4	1	0	0	1	2	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	54	45
Hastings	27	23	17	8	12	10	1	12	2	4	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	119	98
Inver Grove Heights	46	12	22	14	13	6	6	4	4	1	4	3	1	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	142	105
Lakeville	64	25	19	21	15	7	9	4	4	0	1	2	4	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	178	126
Mendota Heights	27	5	3	4	4	1	2	3	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	55	46
Other Law Enforcement	0	0	0	11	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	10
Rosemount	44	11	22	5	6	5	2	5	0	12	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	119	103
South St. Paul	56	15	22	8	9	19	9	9	2	1	3	3	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	160	124
West St. Paul	22	27	5	7	9	3	2	0	0	1	3	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	83	58
TOTAL	598	275	245	155	142	95	73	71	35	34	29	26	23	19	17	6	5	5	4	2	0	0	1859	1446

* Drug-related are reported under the city in which the offense occurred. The Drug Task Force includes representatives from the Apple Valley, Burnsville, Eagan, Farmington, Hastings, Inver Grove Heights, Lakeville, Mendota Heights, Rosemount, Savage, South St. Paul and West St. Paul Police Departments and the Dakota County Sheriff's Office.

** Numbers in all categories include charges of attempts to commit the crime.

RECENT TRENDS IN **JUVENILE DELINQUENCY PROSECUTIONS**

Filed by the Dakota County Attorney's Office



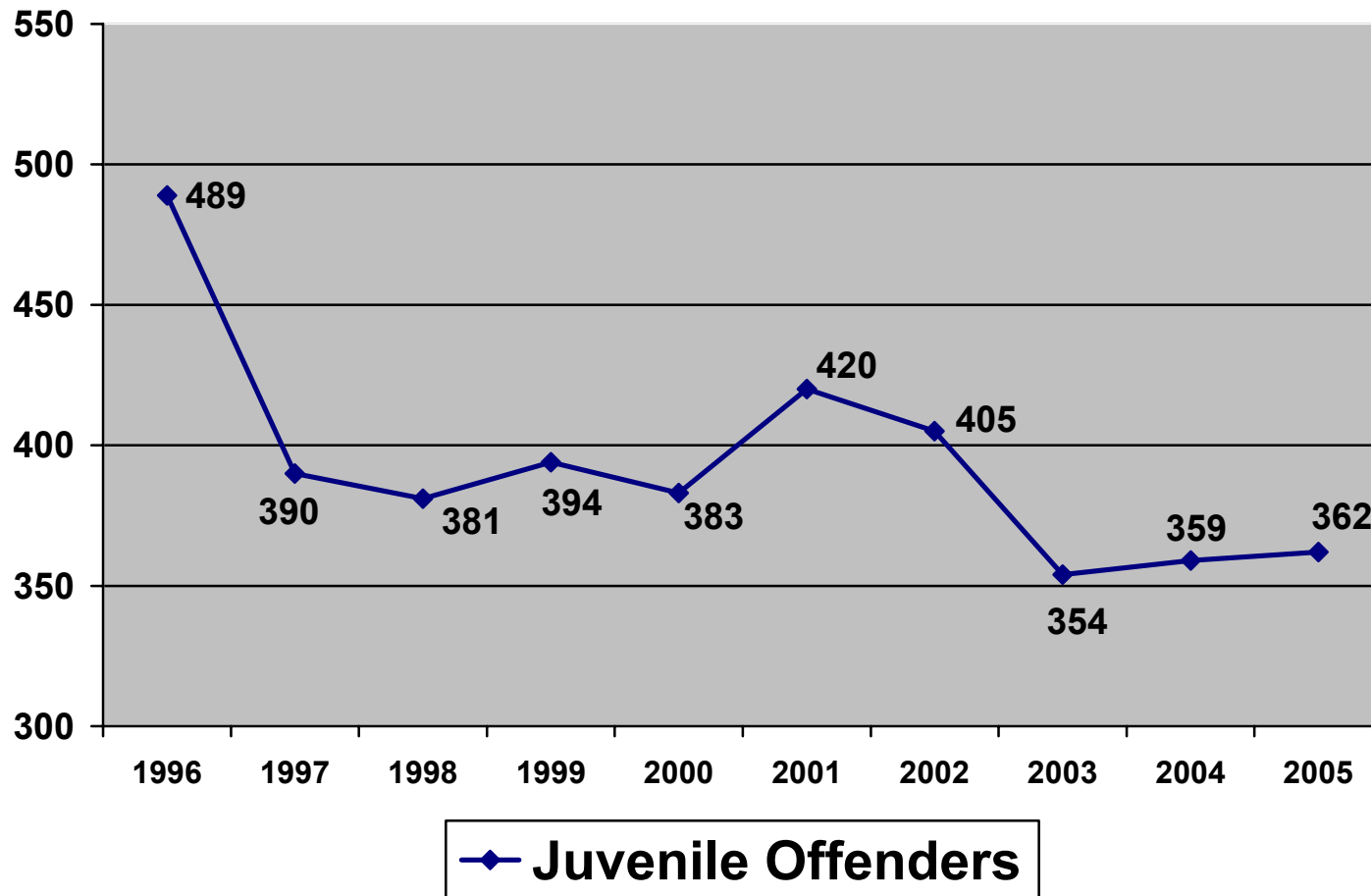
These include some petty misdemeanors and all misdemeanors, gross misdemeanors and felonies committed by Dakota County youth under the age of 18 in Dakota County. While the overall growth in juvenile offenders charged with criminal offenses in Dakota County since 1990 is 206%, the vast majority of this growth occurred from 1990 to 1996. In the last 10 years (1996-2005), the overall growth rate is only 5%.

Compiled by
JAMES C. BACKSTROM
DAKOTA COUNTY ATTORNEY

Dakota County

Juvenile Offenders Charged with Felony-Level Crimes

1996 to 2005



Compiled by: James C. Backstrom, Dakota County Attorney

Juvenile Violent Crime Charges in Dakota County

Total Charges for Juvenile Crimes of Violence (Homicide, Attempted Homicide, Assault, Offenses Involving Dangerous Weapons, Kidnapping, Criminal Vehicular Homicide/Injury, Robbery, Sex Offenses and Terroristic Threats*)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Violent Crime Charges</u>
1996	509
1997	441
1998	420
1999	434
2000	414
2001	442
2002	498
2003	461
2004	380
2005	427
Ten Year Average ...	442

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* The statistics do NOT include any juveniles prosecuted as adults for any of these crimes. In 2005, 6 juveniles were prosecuted as adults.

RECENT TRENDS IN JUVENILE DANGEROUS WEAPONS- RELATED CHARGES

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Felonies	39	23	34	22	28	35	30	23	30	26
Gross Misdemeanors	13	7	5	5	12	6	3	8	17	7
Misdemeanors	26	17	19	17	10	8	4	11	11	2
Ordinance Violations	22	14	13	8	15	12	11	9	5	19
TOTAL:	100	61	71	52	65	61	48	51	63	54
THE TEN YEAR AVERAGE IS 63										

Compiled by:
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